

National Watershed Coalition
1023 Manvel Ste.D
Chandler, Oklahoma

Oral Testimony of
Trey Lam
Pauls Valley, Oklahoma
National Watershed Coalition

Presented to the
Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit, Rural Development and Research
Of the Committee on Agricultural
U. S. House of Representatives

El Reno Field Hearing
September 18, 2006

My name is Trey Lam; I live and work along the Washita River in Garvin County, Oklahoma. I'm an agricultural producer, a Garvin Conservation District board member, and a representative of the National Watershed Coalition. On behalf of the Coalition I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony at this hearing.

My home county has 13 USDA-assisted watershed projects that include 146 flood control dams. These dams provide over \$10 million in annual benefits in flood damage reduction, soil erosion control, water supplies, recreation and fish and wildlife habitat. The dams benefit over 2,890 farms and ranches, protect 125 bridges and hundreds of miles of roads, and provide protection for 135,000 acres of floodplain. Two of the lakes formed by Watershed Program dams provide the sole source of water for more than 7,000 residents in Pauls Valley and Elmore City. These and thousands of other projects across the nation are important to the land and water resources of this nation.

Principal to our perspective on this program is the notion that it is a federally assisted partnership. State and local entities must be full and equal partners in shaping the future, just as they were when the legacy of this program was created. The Watershed Program works where other federal water resource programs won't. This success can be credited to Local Watershed Sponsors, who make decisions as close to the on-the-ground issues as possible.

While the watershed program has its own authorizing legislation, the current Farm Bill has served as an important piece of legislation to drive the rehabilitation of aging dams built under the Small Watershed Program. The NWC believes that the current Farm Bill process presents a continuing important opportunity for Congress to extend the public benefits derived from work performed under the Watershed Program.

We ask that you authorize funding in the Farm Bill and then join us in working with appropriators to insure authorized funding is fully appropriated. All across this nation, local sponsors are working diligently to secure land rights and generate matching funds. Based on the credibility and accountability of these local sponsors much has been achieved in anticipation of federal watershed rehabilitation funds. A reliable steady appropriation from Congress is needed to assist sponsors in making efficient use of often limited local resources.

Focusing Farm Bill land treatment programs on watershed boundaries designated by the USDA Watershed Program will not only yield the desired on-farm benefits but could also enhance and extend the public benefits derived from existing watershed projects. Through this coordinated approach, conservation goals in both program areas can be achieved. This coordinated approach may reduce the perception of land treatment program duplication and make more funds available

for unique watershed program specific areas such as flood control and municipal and industrial water supply.

We ask that as you develop the Conservation title of the new Farm Bill, that you continue to consider the importance of the USDA Watershed Program as well.

In closing, I recognize that this subcommittee does not have direct responsibilities in the area of appropriations. However I would be remiss if I did not point out that the impact of the decline in funding for the Watershed program can certainly be seen around the nation as well as in Oklahoma. We believe that the Administration's recent funding requests are not in touch with the reality of the documented demand for the program. In Oklahoma we have a significant number of well-planned projects that are waiting on the necessary funding to be completed. Fluctuations in the USDA Watershed Program budget make it difficult to maintain experienced watershed personnel and sufficient technical assistance.

We appreciate the recent efforts of this committee to provide oversight for the watershed program. We support your efforts to educate the Administration at all levels concerning the necessity to embrace and acknowledge the value and success of the Watershed Program and the investment, benefits and partnership it represents. We believe that the Watershed Program is a model of effectiveness and accountability. We pledge our continuing support for your actions on behalf of watershed sponsors across the country.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today.

**Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Required Witness Disclosure Form**

House Rules* require nongovernmental witnesses to disclose the amount and source of Federal grants received since October 1, 2004.

Name: Trey Lam
National Watershed Coalition
 Address: PO Box 5516 Chandler, OK 74834
 Telephone: 405-627-0670

Organization you represent (if any): National Watershed Coalition

1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2004, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract. House Rules do **NOT** require disclosure of federal payments to individuals, such as Social Security or Medicare benefits, farm program payments, or assistance to agricultural producers:

Source: _____ Amount: _____

Source: _____ Amount: _____

2. If you are appearing on behalf of an organization, please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) the organization has received since October 1, 2004, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract:

Source: USDA NRCS contributions Amount: \$110,000
agreement FY2004
 Source: USDA NRCS contributions agreement Amount: \$109,120
USDA NRCS contributions
agreement FY2006 Amount: \$108,021

Please check here if this form is NOT applicable to you: _____

Signature: Don A. Sargent - Executive Director NWC

* Rule XI, clause 2(g)(4) of the U.S. House of Representatives provides: Each committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, require witnesses who appear before it to submit in advance written statements of proposed testimony and to limit their initial presentations to the committee to brief summaries thereof. In the case of a witness appearing in a nongovernmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by the witness or by any entity represented by the witness.

PLEASE ATTACH DISCLOSURE FORM TO EACH COPY OF TESTIMONY.

Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Information Required From Non-governmental Witnesses

House rules require non-governmental witnesses to provide their resume or biographical sketch prior to testifying. If you do not have a resume or biographical sketch available, please complete this form.

1. Name: Trey Lam
2. Business Address: 632 N Pecan
Pauls Valley OK 73075
3. Business Phone Number: 405-238-0183
4. Organization you represent: National Watershed Coalition
5. Please list any occupational, employment, or work-related experience you have which add to your qualification to provide testimony before the Committee:
over 20 years owner operator of Lam Farms. 4 years on the Garvin Conservation District board. OACD Area II representative. Past President OK Crop Improvement Association. Past Chair OK Soybean board checkoff. Past President OK Soybean Association. Officer in OK Alfalfa Hay and Seed Association. OSU Dean's Advisory Council Member. OSU State Advisory Committee for Extension
6. Please list any special training, education, or professional experience you have which add to your qualifications to provide testimony before the Committee:
BA Yale University. Lived and farmed in the Washita River Watershed one of the original PL-534 designated watersheds in the nation. Trey farms 2000 acres. His operation includes 900 acres of alfalfa as well as corn, soybeans and wheat. Current cattle operation involves 50 cow calf pairs. His son and daughter 14 and 16 respectively, maintain their own herd of registered Angus cattle and are active in the show ring.
7. If you are appearing on behalf of an organization, please list the capacity in which you are representing that organization, including any offices or elected positions you hold:
I am chairman of the Garvin Conservation District, a member in good standing of the National Watershed Coalition

PLEASE ATTACH THIS FORM OR YOUR BIOGRAPHY TO EACH COPY OF TESTIMONY.